

What is CHIS?

CHIS is the California Health Interview Survey. It is the largest state health survey conducted in the country. The first survey – CHIS 2001 – collected information from 55,248 households drawn from every county in the state. The survey focused on public health and access to health care, and since hunger is a health issue, questions about food insecurity were also asked in the survey.

Where can I get more information about CHIS?

CHIS is a collaborative effort of the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, the California Department of Health Services, and the Public Health Institute. The Project and staff are housed at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Visit <http://www.chis.ucla.edu> for more information.

Who was asked questions about food insecurity?

Adults were contacted using a random-digit dial telephone method between November 2000 and September 2001. If the households had incomes below 200% percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) they were given the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 6-question Food Security Measurement.

What does 200% of the federal poverty level really mean?

Here's a chart that shows what 200% means in terms of hourly and annual household wages:

2002 Poverty Guidelines
Income for Families at 200% of Poverty

Family Size	Hourly	Monthly	Annual
1	\$ 8.52	\$ 1,477	\$ 17,720
2	\$ 11.48	\$ 1,990	\$ 23,880
3	\$ 14.44	\$ 2,503	\$ 30,040
4	\$ 17.40	\$ 3,017	\$ 36,200
5	\$ 20.37	\$ 3,530	\$ 42,360
6	\$ 23.33	\$ 4,043	\$ 48,520

Common can hunger really be measured?

The hunger and food insecurity measurement used by CHIS is a widely accepted and widely used measure developed and tested over the last decade. It was developed by the U.S. Food Security Measurement Project, an ongoing collaboration among Federal agencies, academic researchers, and private commercial and nonprofit organizations. The measure came in response to the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990. For more information on this measurement visit <http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/FoodSecurity/> or visit www.centeronhunger.org

How come the U.S. Department of Agriculture says 5.1 million Californians are food insecure and CHIS says there are 2.24 million?

CHIS only asked the food insecurity questions of adults with household incomes below 200% FPL. Some adults above this level may be experiencing food insecurity, thus the number of food insecure adults is likely to be higher. But most importantly, CHIS only looked at adult food insecurity. When children in households with adults experiencing food insecurity are taken into account, the actual number may exceed the 5.1 million estimate by the US Department of Agriculture which included children.

Hunger among kids is such a problem. How can CHIS be used to talk about childhood hunger?

Childhood hunger was not directly assessed by CHIS – this is clear. But CHIS does tell us that families with children had higher rates of food insecurity than families without. It also tells us that about half of the households experiencing food insecurity contained children. Researchers could make no claim that the food insecurity experienced by adults impacts the food insecurity of the children. Experienced anti-hunger advocates, though, are certain to make the claim that many of these children are not immune to the food insecurity and hunger experienced by the adults in their lives.

CHIS found that hungry people were not accessing the food assistance programs available to help. Why?

There are many reasons why. One major reason CFPA cites is the federal food programs, such as food stamps, were not originally designed to meet the needs of hungry working people. As a result, working families have a hard time getting help. There are a number of barriers that exist – to find out what they are and what CFPA is doing about them visit

<http://www.cfpa.net/foodstamps/KnockingDownBarriers2002.doc>

Who can I call to find out more about the CHIS Food Security Results?

For more on the policy recommendations or how these results can be used in your community, contact:

George Manalo-LeClair, Director of Legislation and Policy at California Food Policy Advocates. (415) 777-4422 ext. 103 or george@cfpa.net

For more info on the food insecurity results or the measurement, contact:

Dr. Gail Harrison, Associate Director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition. (310) 825-3738 or gailh@ucla.edu

For more information on CHIS, contact:

Dr. Charles DiSogra, Director of the California Health Interview Survey at the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. (310) 794-0946 or cdisogra@ucla.edu

How can I find out more about hunger and food insecurity using other CHIS survey questions or more about my community?

AskCHIS lets you select health and hunger topics that interest you and then quickly see the results in tables and graphs! Visit <http://www.chis.ucla.edu/main/default.asp> to use this free, easy tool.